

# Sustainable Building Program Water



Northern Arizona lies in an arid climate with limited water resources. The depletion of groundwater is an especially critical issue in Northern Arizona. It is increasingly important to incorporate water conservation measures into building design. \* ***See our Information Sheets in our resource section for more water use ideas*** \*

## Links

- [City of Flagstaff Water conservation page](#)
- [Rainwater Catchment](#)
- [Arizona Native Plant Society](#)
- ***NEW!*** [Oasis Design - Grey Water Use](#)

## Outdoor Landscaping and Xeriscaping

Much of our water use is dedicated to outdoor landscaping. You can substantially reduce your water usage by replacing non-native plants and shrubs with native varieties. Native vegetation is well-adapted to our arid climate and intense sunlight. Native plants not only require less water but also require less maintenance once established. Pesticides are usually not needed as native plants have built in protection to local pests that exotic plants do not have. Also consider reseeding your lawn with a native grass variety or remove it and replace it with a more environmentally-friendly landscaping. *Xeriscape* is becoming more popular in dry areas: it utilizes plants which require no supplemental irrigation and often incorporates rock mulches to create aesthetically pleasing groundcovers.

## Rainwater Catchment

There are numerous techniques for rainwater catchment, ranging from simple to highly detailed. During the monsoon season, Northern Arizona receives a substantial amount of rain. Capturing this “free” water can reduce our dependence on our limited groundwater reserves. Rain barrels can be used to catch and store water from existing gutters and are a simple way to irrigate landscaping. Above ground and underground cisterns can store larger amounts of water, and may provide year-round water for both landscaping and domestic use when properly stored. The City of Flagstaff sells rain barrels, and both barrels and cisterns can be found through a variety of sources. For more information, check out the CCSBP *Information Sheets* on rainwater calculations and collection.

## Greywater Use

The water from showers and sinks is called *greywater*. This water can be used to flush toilets (with additional piping) and to irrigate landscaping. To use greywater for irrigation, you may obtain a permit from the county Health Department. See the CCSBP website section, *Permitting Codes and Guidelines*, for information on greywater use, or contact the Building Department for more information.

## Water fixtures and Appliances

Leaky fixtures can account for substantial water loss, so fix them as soon as you notice a leak. Replace faucets and showerheads with low-flow models. Many new toilets are incredibly water-efficient and are affordable

replacements for older models. When it is time to replace an old washing machine or dishwasher, consider buying a new one that uses less water - and usually less energy, too!

**Questions or comments, contact:**

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